Dear Howard, 4/23/74

Yesterday I got a delayed reaction to a letter from a friend of the past, one who has been both a good friend and a double-crosser. He has a career in publishing but is not now a publisher. He is a man of means and he says and I have often believed, of conscience. He was, for example, against Vietnam when it was not popular.

A year ago he tried to get me an agent for a Watergate book. It was a prestigeous outfit and no less sterile and hidebound.

I had written him telling him that I have come to believe that popular understanding of what we call Watergate and dislike for Nixon have reached the point where it is possible to write a relatively short, extraordinarily hot book that makes no explanations for popular understanding.

Here a long phone conversation, several short ones and lunch interrupted so in order to mail this when I have to go into town shortly. I'll have to come to the point without further explanations.

The offer is indefinite except in certain respects: for another "underground" book for which I'd get an extremely modest advance, to be done fast, to be hot and restricted largely to what has been suppressed and by whom.

Because of a number of factors, one of the more obvious being time and with another my fatigue, I would very much want a research assistant who could, among other things retrieve what might be in one of perhaps a half-dozen files while I continue to write and who could, where necessary, make copies. Going over the rough would be a benefit, as would retyoing it. Lil is and will be working part time, she has some of her own private bookkeeping work to do, and there is a limit to the time she'll have.

I don't know what financing I'll have but at best it will be meagre.

If you have no plans for the month after school closes, would you be interested?

I can think of nobody would could do it as well or as helpfully.

Except for the weariness, I seem to be coming out of whatever kind of spasm I had, if it was that. Coughing no longer hurts, I slept without interruption last night and this morning, while I did not walk nearly as far as I used to, I walked about 2/3 mile rather briskly and without wearing out.

I see a local doctor Friday morning and one at our medical service a week from day after tomorrow.

Best,